Amendments to the Claims

1. (Canceled)

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently amended) ~~Valve~~ The assembly according to Claim ~~1~~ 15, wherein said external member is a collar embracing said deformable member.

4. (Currently amended) ~~Valve~~ The assembly according to Claim ~~1~~ 15, wherein said external member is displaceable by sliding lengthwise of said passage.

5. (Currently amended) ~~Valve~~ The assembly according to Claim ~~1~~ 15, wherein said first position is located to one side of said ~~opening~~ passage and said second position is substantially aligned with said ~~opening~~ passage.

6. (Currently amended) ~~Valve~~ The assembly according to Claim ~~1~~ 15 including a rigid housing externally of said deformable member and wherein a part of said deformable member projects outwardly through an opening in said rigid housing for engagement by said external member.

7. (Currently amended) ~~Valve~~ The assembly according to Claim ~~1~~ 15, wherein said deformable member has a part with an inclined surface arranged for engagement by said external member.

8. (Currently amended) ~~Valve~~ The assembly according to Claim 6, wherein said housing has two openings located diametrically opposite one another, wherein said deformable member has two pads projecting outwardly through respective ones of said openings, and wherein said pads each have an inclined external surface shaped for engagement by said external member such that displacement of said external member

causes said pads to be pushed inwardly towards one another thereby opening said opening.

9. (Currently amended) ~~Valve~~ The assembly according to Claim ~~1~~ 15, wherein said normally-closed opening is a slit extending diametrically of said passage.

10. (Currently amended) ~~Valve~~ The assembly according to Claim 9, wherein said deformable member is generally tubular and has a transverse web extending across its diameter and formed integrally with said deformable member, and wherein said slit is provided in said web.

11. (Currently amended) ~~Valve~~ The assembly according to Claim 9 including a substantially rigid reinforcement member extending parallel to said slit on opposite sides such that when a force is applied externally along said slit said reinforcement member is bowed outwardly to open said slit.

12. (Currently amended) A valve comprising: a deformable member having a fluid passage extending therethrough; an internal seal of a deformable material defining a slit extending transversely of said fluid passage; and a substantially rigid reinforcement member of a material different from said deformable material extending parallel to said slit on opposite sides such that when a force is applied externally along said slit said reinforcement member is bowed outwardly to open said slit.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently amended) A closed system suction catheter assembly comprising: a machine end fitting; a patient end fitting; a suction catheter secured at one end with said machine end fitting; and a flexible envelope attached at one end with said machine end

fitting and at its other end with said patient end fitting, said flexible envelope extending between the machine end fitting and the patient end fitting around the suction catheter, wherein said machine end fitting includes a suction control valve operable to control suction applied by said suction catheter, and wherein said patient end fitting includes ~~a suction catheter and~~ a valve, said valve comprising: a deformable member, said deformable member having a fluid passage extending therethrough, and a normally-closed opening within said passage arranged such that it can be opened by external pressure applied to said deformable member; and an external member displaceable on and separate from said deformable member with respect to said deformable member between a first position at which said external member can be released and in which said opening through said deformable member remains substantially closed and a second position in which said opening is opened and remains open when said external member is released even in the absence of any member extending within said passage, such that, when the external member is in the second position the suction catheter can be advanced and retracted ~~the suction catheter is advanceable and retractable~~ through the passage in the deformable member.

16. (Currently amended) ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to Claim 15 including a cleaning chamber located ~~towards a~~ in said patient end ~~of said assembly~~ fitting, wherein said valve is located towards a patient side of said cleaning chamber, and wherein said valve is openable to allow extension of said suction catheter and is closable substantially to isolate said cleaning chamber from the patient and enable cleaning of said catheter.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) A closed system suction catheter assembly comprising: a suction catheter, a machine end fitting including a suction control valve arranged to control suction applied to said catheter, a patient end fitting having a sliding seal through which said suction catheter can be advanced and retracted, and a flexible envelope extending between said machine end fitting and said patient end fitting and enclosing said catheter

between said fittings, wherein said patient end fitting includes a cleaning chamber on a patient side of said sliding seal, said cleaning chamber including an inlet for cleaning fluid and a valve, and wherein said valve includes a tubular deformable member, said deformable member having a fluid passage extending therethrough, a closure member extending across said fluid passage and having a slit normally closed to isolate said cleaning chamber from the patient; and an external collar slidable along said tubular member with respect to said tubular member between a first position in which said slit remains substantially closed when the collar is released and a second position in which said collar applies pressure to said tubular member to open said slit and said slit remains open when the collar is released to allow the catheter to be advanced from and retracted to said cleaning chamber even in the absence of any member extending within said passage.